



Department of Justice

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Thursday, March 22, 2012

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UNITED STATES ATTORNEY'S OFFICE MARKS ONE YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF VIOLENT CRIME INITIATIVE, ANNOUNCES INDICTMENT

Hogsett says much work left to be done, but progress made through hundreds of prosecutions

PRESS RELEASE

INDIANAPOLIS – Joseph H. Hogsett, the United States Attorney, announced this morning the indictment of Aaron Robbins, age 31, of Indianapolis, on federal drug and gun charges that include the illegal possession of a firearm and the use of a firearm in drug trafficking. This indictment comes as the U.S. Attorney's Office marks one year since it launched an effort to prioritize the prosecution of illegally armed felons in Indianapolis and across the state.

"One year ago, this office announced a comprehensive effort to take stolen guns, and the convicted felons to illegally possess them, off the streets of Indianapolis," Hogsett said. "At the time, I said it was easier for some young people in this city to get a gun than it was to get a good education – unfortunately, for far too many that may still be true."

"But this is a long-term project, with much work left to do, and there are no quick fixes," Hogsett added. "I commit today that this office will redouble its efforts in 2012 – more prosecutions, more illegally armed felons behind bars, and as a result, we hope that fewer guns will find their way into the hands of young people in Indianapolis."

Announced in March of 2011, the Violent Crime Initiative (VCI) represents a district-wide strategy to work with local law enforcement and county prosecutors to combat drug traffickers and criminals that use and carry firearms in their illegal activities. Working with federal agencies and local partners, such as the Indianapolis Metropolitan Police Department, the Marion County Sheriff's Department, the Marion County Prosecutor's Office, law enforcement is identifying for federal prosecution the "worst of the worst" in Indianapolis neighborhoods.

There are a number of advantages to federal prosecution:

- Violent criminals are often detained before trial, without bond
- If convicted, defendants often face longer, stiffer sentences
- Once sentenced, federal rules mandate that 85% of time must be served
- There are no “local” federal prisons, and convicted individuals cannot easily continue their criminal activities from a prison cell in Montana or Utah

In the first nine months of the initiative, the VCI produced a dramatic increase in the number of gun-related charges brought federally – from just 14 felony possession charges in 2010 to 103 last year. Of those prosecutions, 59 defendants – more than one-half – lived in Marion County. Together, the criminal records of those five dozen defendants accounted for hundreds of prior felonies in the Indianapolis area, and their prosecutions have resulted in hundreds of illegally-possessioned guns being taken off the streets.

Already in 2012, 30 individuals have been charged with being a felon in possession as part of the VCI, including a dozen Indianapolis defendants, putting the office on pace to exceed last year’s total.

“These chronic offenders view our local jails as a revolving door and consider firearms and drugs to be their personal currency, often leaving a path of destruction in their wake,” Hogsett said. “Our message with this Violent Crime Initiative is simple – that revolving door stops at the federal courthouse steps. It’s a message that may not resonate with those law-abiding citizens in this city, but I assure you that the lawbreakers are hearing it loud and clear.”

Hogsett pointed out that last Friday, Geoffrie Allen Lee Dill, age 24, of Indianapolis, was sentenced to 420 months (35 years) in prison on federal drug and gun charges, including the illegal possession of a firearm by a convicted felon.

Today’s announced indictment alleges that on February 1, 2012, Aaron Robbins was found by Indianapolis law enforcement to possess two different firearms – a Glock .40 caliber pistol, and a Smith & Wesson .38 caliber revolver. Robbins’ criminal history includes multiple felonies in Marion County, and as such he is not legally entitled to possess a gun. Robbins was also allegedly found with methamphetamine, cocaine, and heroin, and is facing federal drug charges as a result.

According to Assistant U.S. Attorney Michelle P. Brady, who is prosecuting the case for the United States, Robbins faces a possible penalty of up to 10 years imprisonment, a fine of up to \$250,000, and up to three years of supervised release upon release from imprisonment if he is convicted of being a felon in possession of a firearm. Based on his criminal history, prosecutors plan on seeking an “Armed Career Criminal” sentencing enhancement, which would mandate a minimum sentence of 15 years in prison.

If convicted on the other two counts, Robbins faces between 5-to-40 years on the drug charge, and 5-to-Life on the charge of using a firearm in furtherance of drug trafficking. An initial hearing will be scheduled before a U.S. Magistrate Judge in Indianapolis.

An indictment is only a charge and is not evidence of guilt. A defendant is presumed innocent and is entitled to a fair trial at which the government must prove guilt beyond a reasonable doubt.

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